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## The Circular Communication Model

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### Abstract

The advent of the internet is the essential factor which had a direct impact on communication. Although many studies have sought to explain and predict the effects of communication on the consumer, however there aren't many systematic studies that explore the effects of the cultural, social, political, technological and economic environment on communication. A descriptive research was conducted by an approach aimed to understand a phenomenon through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods. Our main contribution is to explore the changes that have occurred on communication in the Middle East particularly in Lebanon in the past 15 years. From the exploration of the development that took place, as well as the effects and aspects of these changes, we were able to create a new model of communication. The new circular model of communication puts in the hands of the advertising and higher education industries, a new model of communication.

**Keywords:** Communication; Advertising; Communication model; Media; Globalization; Digital era.

### 1. Introduction

The history of communication is as old as the history of mankind. From the beginning, the man needed to communicate, and communication has evolved with the evolution of humanity. The last century saw significant changes in the industry of mass communication. Today, the media can manipulate and transmit billions of data, with an instant speed. A new era of communication appears: "the digital era", which did not only influence the communication and especially advertising, but it has also changed the structure and services of the advertising agency [1].

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Globalization is a phenomenon that has opened different markets all around the world. The world has become a space without borders, which created the trade in goods and services and gave more importance to communication and especially advertising, which became both a vector and a spectacular point of application for international brands. Another factor is the technology of information and communication, which allows communicating at a distance, by electronic means. Information and communication technology have an important social dimension. The role of the new communication is to meet the needs of the new consumer through advertising which represents more content than art; more content related to the consumer interest which led to more consistent messages that combine emotions with information. The content analysis of the advertising campaigns for the period of 15 years and the interviews with professionals in the advertising field conducted help to understand the factors that directly had an impact on communication and the aspects of this impact. The communication theory has originated with the development of the media, especially the mass media. It is with the rise of different mass media that research in the field of social sciences started to take shape and grow. The research aims to understand the changes that have taken place in the advertising strategies in Lebanon especially at the level of the format, the content of advertising messages and the level of the media used during the last 15 years. These changes will be illustrated through a new communication model. A model, which illustrates the changes that have taken place over the past 15 years and that, is representative of contemporary advertising communication in Lebanon. This study aims to explore the changes that occurred in the advertising strategies in Lebanon, between 2000 and 2015. It is from the year 2000 that the daily life and the management of businesses, are shaped by the internet, which has become the media that has grown the most in the history of all means of communication. In Lebanon, advertising is one of the economic sectors, that is the most affected by globalization. The Lebanese were the pioneer of advertising in the Arab world and have conserved a certain leadership in this field. All of this explains the choice of the period of study that starts in year 2000 over a period of 15 years and the choice of the Lebanese market being a pioneer in this field. The theoretical framework of this research study is based on the functionalist theory and on two recent models of communications: The ecological model of communication and the community communication model. The Functionalist theory is a theory that is based on the fact that the society is a system with an equilibrium that depends on the integration of its elements. The society is therefore considered as an organic whole; each of its constituent parts is contributing just like the various organs of the living body to maintain other parts and that of the social body as a whole. Malinowski suggests that any practice has for function to meet the needs of individuals constituting a society. The functionalism of Malinowski is based on the fact that it is always the whole society and not its separate elements that meet individual need. For him, the culture is how people adapt to the conditions determined by their nature and their environment and has a function to satisfy their biological and sociological needs. There are three postulates at the base of the functionalist theory: the assumption of the functional unit, the postulate of universal functionalism and finally the assumption of need. These three assumptions show that any part of a system is functional for the entire social system, and that each social and cultural element has an essential function in the system. The ecological model of communication is an elaboration of the classical model of Lasswell of the study of communication: «... Who ...Says what ... through which channel... To whom... With what effect ». In the ecological model, the "who" represents the creators of messages, the "what" are the messages, the "in which channel" is specified in the media and languages (which are the content of the channels) "to whom" are the consumer of the messages, and the effects are in various

relationships between the primitives, including relationships, opportunities, tasks, interpretations and continued evolution of the language in the media. The ecological model of communication states that the means of communication are, in sum, the product of a set of complex interactions between their primary components: messages, people (as creators of messages, consumers of messages and in other roles), languages and media. Three of these components are themselves complex systems and the subject of the entire field of study, psychology, sociology, Anthropology (all three, including the study of people), Linguistics (language), the ecology of media (media) and the communication (messages, language and media). Although messages can be considered as complex entities, their complexities can be described entirely in the languages, the media and the people who use them. This ecological model of communication is, in its most basic reading, a theory of the covenant of the messages and the systems that allow them to be transmitted. Messages are the central element of the model and are the most basic element of interaction between people, language and the media [7]. The community communication model was designed 2 years after the release of Facebook. With the advent of social networking, there was an emergence of real communities on the internet, much more powerful than the existing simple forums or blogs. The phenomenon of social media has allowed individuals to publicly display their membership and regroup with other individuals who share the same interests or ideas, or even to share their loyalty to a brand or a product. All of this prompted advertisers and agencies to react and to take seriously the web communities. Indeed, professionals and agencies have not grasped directly the importance of these new sources of information and for some time, they were unable to reach their targets in an effective way. With the advent of social networks on the internet, agencies and advertisers, have faced a new virtual fence (filter) implementation by the community of the social network. The industry becomes in need of a communication model, which considers these changes. After several months of investigations and research, Julien Pansier, a professional of operational communication, develops the community or viral communication model; a simple model in its schematic representation. This model takes into account that the message is filtered by codes, customs and the so-called 'Community' means of communication and so explores the emergence of physical and virtual communities in the society of the twentieth century. This model is not about a transmitter and a receiver but a transmitter and a community. The individual is no longer seen as a simple receiver but as a receiver within a group, claiming his belonging to the group. This individual is reached by a sent message, through the community communication channels. This forms the basis of the Internet 'buzz'. The message is no longer received directly from the issuer but coded by channels of communication to communities and risk of being poorly interpreted. This model explores a different communication strategy, seeking more than just to convince the individual, but to seduce a community in order to gain its trust (emotional goal) and thus to push individuals to Act (conative goal) or simply to be informed (cognitive goal). When the general community opinion validates the good founded the message, the individual will be affected by the latter, and will affect by all other members. The feedback is more controlled, since it passes through the filter of the community [14].

## **2. Materials and Methods**

A descriptive research approach was conducted. In the first place, we opted for a qualitative approach since it is considered the most appropriate where the purpose of the research is to understand a phenomenon in depth and to get rich and detailed data; suitable qualitative technique is the interview. Second, we used a quantitative approach in order to generalize the data and prove the research hypotheses; the appropriate quantitative

technique is the analysis of the content [29]. The sample should "observe" the subject that interests us and offer both the similarity and the variance between the different observed situations. We have used what Patton qualifies as purposeful sampling, choosing to stop on a relatively small number of rich information, which can help us get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study [22:230]. It seemed best to specifically target professionals, having worked on advertising strategies for brands that have the most invested in media over the past 15 years and that were selected in the content analysis. These brands, which are known as "key players" in the industry, due to their large investment in advertising communication, are the most affected by the changes and their effects on the advertising strategies of brands. A study of thematic evaluation should establish criteria to hold a person in a sample. The criteria are:

- Having an experience in local or multinational agencies.
- Having a 15 years' experience in the advertising industry (Except for the digital media expert)
- Occupying a managerial position in one of the major departments of a full-service agency
- Having worked on advertising campaigns for key players in the market that were selected as a sample in the content analysis.

We have a sample of eight (8) professionals, which turns out to be enough to cover the phenomenon under study in a reasonable manner, while considering the objectives of the research [22]. Yin said that six (6) to ten (10) cases may be sufficient, to show both, similarities between the cases and to establish the necessary theoretical distinctions [26]. Every professional presented a part of the advertising strategy. Because we have conceptualized the decision-making process, as being contextual, we sought participants from two different backgrounds, while maintaining a certain degree of homogeneity, to allow comparisons and elicit the convergences and divergences between the multinational agencies and local agencies. Participants come from two types of advertising agencies: 4 of them are managers in multinational agencies and 3 are managers in local agencies. We have also sought to recruit a participant from the advertising research sector, since research plays a main role in the decisions taken at the level of the advertising strategy. Finally, 7 of the 8 participants have more than 15 years' experience and 1 participant has slightly less, because his experience is in digital media. The table summarizes the characteristics of the participants. The technique used to gain access to the sample is: the privileged interviewee. Privileged interviewees must meet the above-mentioned criteria. Exclusive privileged interviewers are 8 people who have significant experience in the following departments: media planning, customer service, creative, copywriting, digital media, research, management and production, in top agencies (local or multinational) in Lebanon. 8 selected people meet the criteria in the selection of the sample. The interviews were intended to identify the major factors that contributed to the changes in the advertising strategies in Lebanon, over the last 15 years and to identify the effects of these changes on the development of these strategies. Our primary method of data collection was the semi-structured interview. Interviews allow the researcher to have access to data, which are not observable directly [22], which means that in our study, the knowledge and experience of the selected professionals should be explored in order to address the issue of research. Indeed, although the outcome of the decision-making process may be observable, all of the various operations, constituting the decision-making process, aren't it: the interview is an effective method to have access to it [22:341]. Finally, this method enabled us to benefit from the ideas of professionals, at the level of

the new model of communication, through the question prompting them to draw the communication model from their point of view. In a thematic interview, it comes to clarify answers detailed on each topic and respondents must not be interrupted. The different introduced themes, throughout the interview are:

- The content of the message
- The Format of the message
- The Media Scene
- The Consumer
- The advertising Agencies
- The Communication Model

The use of standardized and prepared in advance basic questions, in the form of semi-structured interviews, enabled us to ensure that we meet the objectives for each interview, as well as, to continue the same line of questioning with all participants, in order to obtain possibly comparable results [13]. The first stage of analysis, after the transcription of data, is to examine and study the data. In this step we get more familiarity with the data, and a deeper understanding of what the interviewees reported during interviews. The second step is the theme identification, assessment and review. It is important to identify the presentations of the facts which are supposed to be true, about the experience of the interviewees, in the field of advertising and falling in the exploration of the changes in the content of the message, the message format and the selected media. After the identification of the statements and reviewed facts, it is important to interpret them, in order to achieve the development of the themes. Themes help us understand trends and patterns suggested by data removed and interpreted. The third step considers the review and evaluation of the development of themes. In the development of the theme, we address the areas of creativity, customer service, media plan and digital media from the interpreted data in the first two steps. A theme, describing the conclusions, is proposed in each of the above areas. Then, we class the recovered data, under the different themes through analytical trial. This allows examining the raw information pertaining to each topic, to determine the correctness of the themes. And finally, once any relevant content to the theme is saved, the researcher will assess the theme. The theme is reinforced, whenever a data item is found, that supports the theme. Otherwise the theme is redefined and will be reviewed until all relevant data are addressed and support the defined theme. The fourth step is needed to make the results of useful qualitative data, maximum. We talk in this stage of the interrelation between the different themes, Meta-Themes. The development of "Meta-themes" will sum up the similarities and the differences between each of the individual themes. At this stage, the researcher is ready to begin, to declare the results of the research. The second research technique chosen is the content analysis, which is to analyze the content of an advertisement through studying the message itself rather than the Communicator or the audience. Kolbe cites the advantages of using content analysis; first of all, it allows an "unobtrusive appraisal of communications" which means a discreet communications assessment [25:244]. Second, the content analysis can evaluate the effects of environmental variables and source characteristics on message content, in addition to the effects of different kinds of message content on receiver responses. Finally, the content analysis provides an empirical starting point to generate new data for research on the nature and the effect of specific communication [25:244]. The researcher has resorted to the content analysis, a quantitative approach to collect data that can illustrate the

changes that have taken place at the advertising strategies level through the comparison of advertising messages that appeared between 2000 and 2015 and which were spread over 3 periods from the withdrawn data of the interviews conducted.

- 2000-2005
- 2005-2010
- 2010-2015

It is important to choose a statistical population which can highlight the changes that have taken place, during the period of 15 years and at the same time that can be generalized. That is why; our unit of analysis includes services and products as well as local and international brands. This selection helps us to identify if the changes are the same, at the level of international brands and local brands or not and if the changes are also the same, at the level of products and services. The number of active brands in the Lebanese market is so big so we had to use a different criterion to select the sample: the top investors on mass media (TV and/or press) who spent continuously during the period of the study. From this specific statistical population, we were able to select the sample, which will help us to generalize the data retrieved in this study and to complete, set aside or confirm the collected data from interviews with professionals. In a matter of broad search like the question of this study, which seeks to understand the changes, at the level of content, format and media, for a period of 15 years. A multi-stages sampling will be used. The technique that will be used is the technique of sampling in clusters, which consists of the division of the population into groups: Group 1: products, group 2: Services. The technique consists of collecting only a certain number of individuals from where the grapes are selected.

- Stage 1: Local and international brands that invested the most on mass media in a continuous way from 2000 till 2015
- Stage 2: the sub-clusters also divided equally between local/international From this, the sample was selected in a random way and with one condition, the brands selected at random do not belong to the same category of products. Duplicated ads are eliminated because the focus is on the message rather than its total exposure.

The study is done on the advertisements that appeared on TV and Press. It was essential to have access to the Statex Software in order to be able to retrieve all the visuals of the selected brands throughout the periods of the study. »Statex « is a research software that monitors advertising expenditures on all traditional media since the year 1999. This software is owned by the multinational research company « AGB Stat Ipsos » « Stat » was established in Lebanon 1988, the company operates in all the Middle East region and provide multiple research services related to marketing research, advertising research and other fields. The study is done on the advertising campaigns launched between 2000 and 2015, a coding scheme has been developed and the coders have been selected. In order to increase the knowledge of the coders with the coding scheme, operational definitions have been trained and required preliminary tests have been undertaken. Programmers have been tested for reliability between inter-coders. Twenty-seven random ads from the sample were selected for the test. The total number of ads in the study, is 256 ads and twenty-seven ads for the pretest represent more than 10% of the sample, which is normally recommended. These selected ads are not used in the results of the study. The ads were coded

individually, using the coding sheet and operational definitions. The results of the pre-test of the sample withdrawn percentage were used to determine the inter-coders reliability. Two coders have been selected to start the test. The researcher was not among coders to secure unbiased information. Advertising campaigns (on TV and press) for brands which have the most invested on an ongoing basis, during the period 2000-2015, were analyzed. The study analyzes two campaigns on TV and two campaigns in the press, by brand, by year. The sample was not chosen completely randomly, as brands have been selected on the basis of some specific criteria, to answer the research questions. Some studies also indicate that random sampling is not necessary to the content analysis of this type. Krippendorff argues that a random selection of content for the test is not necessary. Print advertising and television commercials are analyzed, and the duplicated ads have been rejected [15]. The data have been divided over several periods, in order to effectively show the developments over the past fifteen years. Periods were selected at the end of the qualitative research and collected data from interviews, which pushed us to divide the period into 3: 2000-2005/2005-2010/2010-2015. The ads have been coded according to the programming sheet and the results were presented in graphs [8].

### **3. Results**

In order to understand the changes that occurred on the level of the advertising strategies it was important on a first place to divide the period of the study 2000 to 2015 into different parts and to give for each part a description. What seems to be interesting in the findings is that all the interviewees have divided the period in the same way with the same description:

- 2000-2005: The Discovery; the era of fantasy; the emergence of « MBUS », specialized units in media planning.
- 2005-2010: The Learning, the rise of social networks; the opportunity; the nationalist communication
- 2010-2015: The Development, the restructuring and reorganization, due to the emergence of new specialized entities; the winner who survives is the one who stays; The era of social networking; The era of data analysis

The period 2000-2005 is the period of discovery of digital media, on the creativity level it is the era of fantasy and finally on the level of media planning it is the period of the emergence of MBUs, specialized entities in media planning. From 2005 to 2010 it is the period of learning; agencies start to learn and to discover more and more the digital media and to invest more in it especially in digital creation. It is the time to benefit from this new opportunity. During this same period major political events have occurred and made of this period a period of nationalist communication. Finally, between 2010 and 2015 it is the period of development, the period of restructuring and reorganizing advertising agencies. Only those who understood the changes that occurred on the media scene and were pioneer to adapt to these changes and to be able to answer clients' needs were the ones who survived this period, it is the social networking era. And as social networks give the advertiser access to personal information related to the targeted audience and at the same time puts the power in the hands of the consumers who becomes himself a communicator; all of this made of the 2010-2015 the era of data analysis. All of the above prove that important changes happened in the advertising industry in Lebanon between 2000 and 2015 especially on the level of the strategy which reinforces the objective of the study and its importance.

The division of the period of study helps us in dividing the advertising campaign that will be studied in the content analysis into 3 periods: 2000-2005/2005-2010/2010-2015 in order to be able to describe the changes that occurred on the level of the format, the content and the media used by comparing the advertising campaign of the selected 3 periods. All the changes, at the level of the consumer, of the advertiser, the budget, the media scene, the format and the content of the message, confirm that the advertising model also underwent major changes. At the level of the advertiser and the receiver, we're talking about the advertiser who becomes a receiver and the receiver who becomes an advertiser, as Pansier explains his theory of the ecological model of communication. And at the level of the message, we no longer speak of a single message, but several personalized, simple and direct, and especially "phenomenal". An innovative classic or digital channel does not matter if it is used in a creative way to the point that a person can be itself the channel. The receiver is stronger than ever, he inspires the advertiser and he have complete power to censor the information he receives, he himself plays the role of "Gatekeeper". Through feedback, which have become quick and direct, advertisers become receivers who analyze these messages for developing other messages. And so, the model of communication is more than ever a model of two-way communication and even can be described as a model of vicious circle, where the communication never stops between the advertiser and the receiver, who are both communicators. After reviewing the results of quantitative and qualitative research, it is now necessary to assess whether the results have responded to the research questions and indeed support the hypotheses of the study. The first asked research question covers the changes that have taken place at the level of creativity. From the data retrieved, the conclusion which has been drawn to the level of creativity shows that there was a change at the level of the advertising format, which became less artistic and much more strategic. There is also a change on the level of content, which became simpler, more direct and more personal. The second question which arises is about the changes that have taken place on the media scene in Lebanon. We notice that there has been recently an increased penetration of digital media, which is becoming an integral part of any developed advertising strategy especially from 2013 to 2015 which required the integration of the traditional and digital media, and this integration is being acquired. The third question that arises is related to the changes that have taken place at the level of advertising agencies. The interviews reveal the major change which took place at the level of the structure of advertising agencies, which became more and more specialized entities or boutiques rather than 'full service ' agencies. Indeed, the power has shifted from the hands of agencies to the hands of the audience, the customer becomes more and more aware and he was the main initiator of the digital service in agencies. The advertising industry suffered from a decline in advertising budgets, especially at the level of production, which required the decrease in personnel in the different departments of the Agency and the introduction of a new department, which is responsible of the digital media creations. Therefore, the first two hypotheses, which state that advertising strategies have developed between 2000 and 20005 and advertising strategies development is due to the technological factor that through the birth of the internet has placed the advertising industry into a new era, are supported through the collected data related to the first three research questions. To answer the fourth question: "what are the factors that have contributed to the development of advertising strategies?" we resorted to the analysis of primary and secondary research. Indeed, there are several factors: first the period of 15 years, which is long enough to undergo changes, especially in the world of communication. Second, the field of communication and especially of the advertising communication is a developing field. From press to television ads and finally to the internet, communication is changing with the



evolution of technology. Communication is also changing with the evolution of culture, society, politics and the economy. The fifth question seeks to understand the role that the consumer played in this development. The introduction and penetration of the internet in Lebanon and especially social networks have given a new role to the consumer. The consumer himself became the advertiser, the advertiser is inspired by the ideas the consumer shares on different platforms online. Similarly, power has passed from the hands of the advertiser to the hands of the consumer, who himself became the "Gatekeeper" of advertising messages. The consumer has the power, more than ever, to receive the message or not. It is true that the consumer has more power in his hands, but this cannot be the only reason for the changes which have taken place. So, from the fourth and fifth questions, we can reject the hypotheses that the development of advertising strategies is due to the social factor which has put power in the hands of the consumer. In fact, the main factor which resulted in the development of advertising strategies, is the advent of the internet, which is more a technological factor rather than social. The sixth question seeks to reveal aspects of the development of advertising messages. Indeed, there are several aspects of the development of advertising strategies in Lebanon: technological, social, cultural, economic and even political aspects. When it comes to technology, we are necessarily talking about the invasion of the internet, which in fact is the result of globalization which has affected Lebanon as anywhere else in the world. The social aspect is also important, especially in a society like the Lebanese society who gives a lot of importance to social relations. On the cultural level, the Lebanese culture has facilitated this development, because of its opening abroad and with Lebanese expatriates who are everywhere in the world. At the economic and political level, Lebanon has survived many major events, which have directly influenced all sectors and especially the advertising industry. All this brings us to the seventh and last question, seeking to understand if it is necessary to develop a new model of advertising communication in adapting to the changes affecting advertising strategies. It became clear that there was a change at the level of the advertising communication in Lebanon and that the communications models developed previously should be tailored to these new transformations, in order to achieve a new communication model, which reflects advertising in Lebanon. From the last two questions, we can support the hypotheses that the factors that changed the aspect of communication require the formulation of a new model of advertising communication in Lebanon.

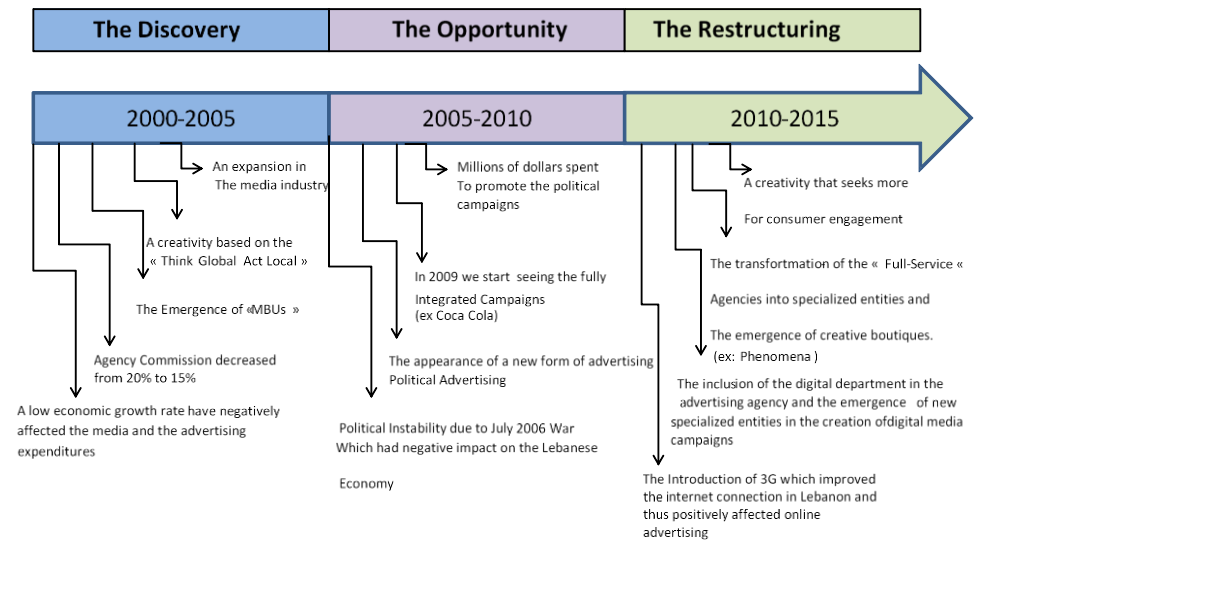
#### **4. Conclusion**

The objective of the study is to observe the development, to identify the factors and finally to understand the aspects of the development that took place in order to develop a new communication model, which takes into account all the changes which took place at the level of advertising communication in Lebanon between 2000 and 2015. In the first place we used the time-scale axis, in order to expose the development that took place at the level of economy, technology, politics, media, and especially at the level of the advertising industry in Lebanon. The axis has been divided into three major periods:

- The Discovery (2000-2005) which represents the discovery of the internet, it illustrates the era of fantasy in advertising creativity and the emergence of new entities called 'MBUS': specialized entities in media planning.
- The Opportunity (2005-2010), this is the era of the apprehension and adaptation to the new digital

media, which has caused the rise of social networks. In other words, this is the period of the opportunity; only the one who gets to take advantage of the opportunity created by the emergence of social networks will survive. This period is also known by the appearance of the national and political campaigns that have played an important role at the level of advertising budgets.

- The restructuring (2010-2015), It's the time of the development of digital media, of the restructuring of the advertising agencies and of the emergence of new specialized entities. During this period, only the Agency who was able to grab the opportunity of the emergence of digital media and social networks, and who was able to meet the needs of customers related to their online presence, was able to survive and even grew. It is also during this time that we began to give more importance to advertising research and data analysis, especially metadata or "Big Data", which are easily accessible through the internet.



**Figure 1:** Time-scale axis 2000-2015. Summary Of Findings

Each period is characterized by a major event, which has influenced all of the advertising industry. In the age of discovery (2000-2005), the main event is at the level of the media. During this period, there was an expansion in the media industry and at the same time several conflicts were held, especially at the level of television whose causes are in most of the time political. It is in this period that the “Tele Liban “fired 503 Lebanese employees and MTV was closed. This period also witnessed the decline of advertising budgets and the lowering of agencies commissions. At the level of advertising agencies, the major change in this period is the emergence of the media planning specialized entities ‘MBUs’. Finally, at the level of creativity ‘Think Global, Act Local’ became the reason of existence in advertising strategies and thus we started witnessing the adaptation of advertising campaigns for multinational brands. The era of opportunity (2005-2010), the advertising industry adapts to the unstable situation in Lebanon and in the middle of the political conflict and the war, the sector gains an opportunity: the emergence of political campaigns and advertising expenditures on political elections. The category of political campaigns has become the major contributor in the growth of the industry during this period. It was during the end of this period, that we begin to see campaigns completely integrated for international brands (for example Coca Cola). At the level of creativity, there was a communication which seeks

to give hope to the Lebanese, a communication that went beyond just promoting a product. Advertising agencies are beginning to find out more about digital media, in order to meet their clients' needs and only the agencies that were able to take advantage of the hidden opportunities of this period, were able to survive. The era of restructuring (2010-2015), in this period the advertising agencies and the media are reshaping. Digital advertising has gradually expanded, because of the introduction of the 3 G to Lebanon which necessitated the introduction of a new service: the service of digital creation and digital media. This necessitated the introduction of a new department and automatically the decrease of professionals in other departments of the agency, and even the emergence of specialized entities at the level of the creative and digital services. At the level of media this era witnessed a strong penetration of digital media. In 2015, the penetration of television is the strongest, followed by digital media. The press becomes the media with the lowest penetration in Lebanon. It is in this restructuring of the media scene that we talk about the integration of digital media and traditional media; an integration that is still being acquired. After having explored the major changes that have taken place during the period of the study and after analyzing the factors and aspects of the development of advertising strategies, we present the new model of communication that will summarize the collected data and illustrates the development of advertising strategies between 2000 and 2015 in Lebanon. This communication model takes into consideration the culture, society, economy and politics in Lebanon and focuses on the particularity of the advertising communication in Lebanon. The functionalist theory states that the society is a system in which the balance depends on the integration of its elements. We notice in the circular model of communication that all the elements are integrated, the communication is incomplete without the integration of the 3 major communicators. According to this theory, the form must always be appropriate to a function, a need and as we notice each Communicator has a specific role and serves a particular need. Finally, based on the functionalist theory the circular communication model is similar to the different organs of a living body, the communication between various elements is done through different communication channels that are similar to the blood vessels that provide communication between the body organs representing the communicators. Each element in the model of communication occupies a position in the communication and is integrated into a coherent system which pursues the satisfaction of the individual and the community needs. The Shannon-Weaver model was taken as the base model on which the changes will be applied, and the development of this new model was conceptualized from the ecological model of communication [7] the model of communication Community [14] and from the collected data of the empirical study. The communication model of Shannon and Weaver is used as a basic model to develop the new model of communication which contains the following elements: Source, Encoding, Message, Channel, Decoding, Receiver, Noise and Feedback. Changes and modifications which have been adapted on the Shannon-Weaver model in order to develop a new model of communication are the following:

**The Source** becomes the Communicator and the receiver is also called the Communicator because according to the ecological model of communication, the roles of the source (creator) and the recipient (consumer) are reflective. People become creative, when they meet or provide comments to other people. The roles of the source (creator) and the receiver (consumer) are also introspective. The creators of messages create their messages, as part of their prospects and their relationships with consumers. Advertisers learn how to create messages through the act of consuming other messages from the people. In fact, through the consumer feedback

who has become quick and direct on digital platforms, the advertiser is able to analyze these messages in order to develop other messages in a comprehensive way. The consumer inspires the advertiser through his ideas that he shares on social networks and plays the role of "Gatekeeper", more than ever, having the power to sort or block messages he wants to receive. Indeed, by their nature, the different platforms online and especially social networks gave the advertiser access to personal information related to the targeted audience. This information is gaining more in importance and the analysis of these data is probably the first step before initiating any communication. We talk more and more about the importance "data analysis" in every stage of the communication model; especially at the level of 'encoding' the message.

**The Encoding** is gaining importance more than ever. Everything begins and ends with the consumer. "Data analysis" replaces the encoding, as the importance of understanding the audience through research exceeds the age, education, and social class. The data analysis seeks to understand the lifestyle of the audience, his interest, and the people who influence him, his key moments, the media he uses and many other important data, which have become easily accessible to advertisers and that require an in-depth analysis, before developing the advertising message. Indeed, the analysis of data becomes a necessity for the development of any communication strategy. This gives high importance to research, which helps the advertiser to better understand the consumer, the competition and especially the media scene. The creators of messages are creating messages as part of their prospects and their relationships with consumers; they seek to optimize their messages to their target audiences. (Ecological model of communication).

**The Message** should be « phenomenal » and should incite the consumer engagement. It becomes harder and harder to impress the consumer through an advertising message, which requires to invest more effort in the development of the content and format of the advertisement. The format of the advertising message is less artistic and more strategic; the size of the ads is more adaptive to different social networking platforms. Indeed as it is mentioned in the model of community communication, the advertising message no longer seeks to convince the individual but to seduce a community in order to gain the confidence of an individual (objective affective), and also push the individuals to act (conative goal) or simply to be informed (cognitive goal). This requires a message that is simple, direct, personal, creative and able to convey the message to the consumer who is bombarded with commercial messages. The messages are more consumer-oriented and use more and more the language of the consumer, which explains the increase in the use of the Arabic language (48% between 2010-2015 vs 34% between 2005-2009) in commercials. The ecological model of communication defines the advertising message, as the element of the model and the product the most fundamental between the people, the language and the media. People learn media using the media and from media people invent and change the messages to be used in advertising.

**The Channels** are divided into several channels: Personal Channel, Community Channel, Mass Channel; each of these three channels represents an integration of traditional and digital media.

- The Personal Channel is developed through social networks. Brands have developed their pages on Facebook for example and communicate with their consumers on their Facebook pages. This communication happens on the page of the brand to the consumer page and so the brand acts as a

person who loves, share and comment on the posts of the consumer; that, in turn, the consumer love, shares and commented on the brand posts, which leads to a personal communication between the brand and the consumer. As shown in the ecological model, the messages consumers interpret as part of their points of view and their relationship with the creators of messages.

- The community channel is explained in the model of community communication, which makes the point on the phenomenon of social networks, which enabled the individual to publicly display his membership and belonging with other individuals who share the same interests or ideas or even share their membership to a brand or a product. The Community model also explains that the message is filtered by codes based on "community" manners and means of communication and so explores the emergence of physical and virtual communities, in society. Through this channel, the advertiser does not seek to reach an individual or a simple receiver, but however a receiver within a group claiming an affiliation with a group. We're talking of a transmitter and a community. When the general community opinion validates the good founded the message, the individual will be affected by the latter, and will affect all other members. Which here joins the community communication model, is the role that the influential or 'opinion leader' or even blogger plays in a community. A few years ago, the influential was most of the time a celebrity, these days we're talking about people who are not necessarily famous but who have a strong knowledge in a certain area. Through this knowledge or even sometimes experience, people play the role of influential and are sometimes described as "trend setters" and as a result, they have the power to influence an entire community that shares the same interests.
- The mass channel represents an integration of traditional and digital media. It is true that the integration between digital media and traditional media is not yet completely made, but this is being acquired. The adaptation of the conventional media in the digital era leads to the integration of media in advertising campaigns. On one hand, the penetration of digital media is still minimal compared to a specific target, as for example the adults (50 +), and on the other hand, the digital media ensures a more focused and much more direct and personalized communication and ensures an increase in the consumption of media, especially among youth. Indeed, digital media alone cannot be used in advertising campaigns, which are intended to promote a product, create awareness or to reach adulthood (50+). The nature of the product can be a major limitation of digital media. All of this requires the integration of traditional and digital media.

**The Decoding** of the message is based on the interpretation of consumers, which is within the limits of languages and media (ecological model). The relationship between the receiver and the advertiser has grown from a paternal relationship to a friendship relationship where the consumer decodes the message from his desires, his interests and his way of thinking. Friendship makes the task harder, that necessitates managing the different characters of consumers and advertisers may not impose a specific message, but instead the message will be analyzed from the point of view of the consumer in order to be accepted or rejected. In this point also, the data analysis is very important in order to predict how the consumer is going to decode messages from his experience with the brand, his desires, his needs, the community of which he is part, and many other factors that only research and data analysis can interpret.

**The Receiver** becomes himself the advertiser, which is why we talk about a Communicator. Communication

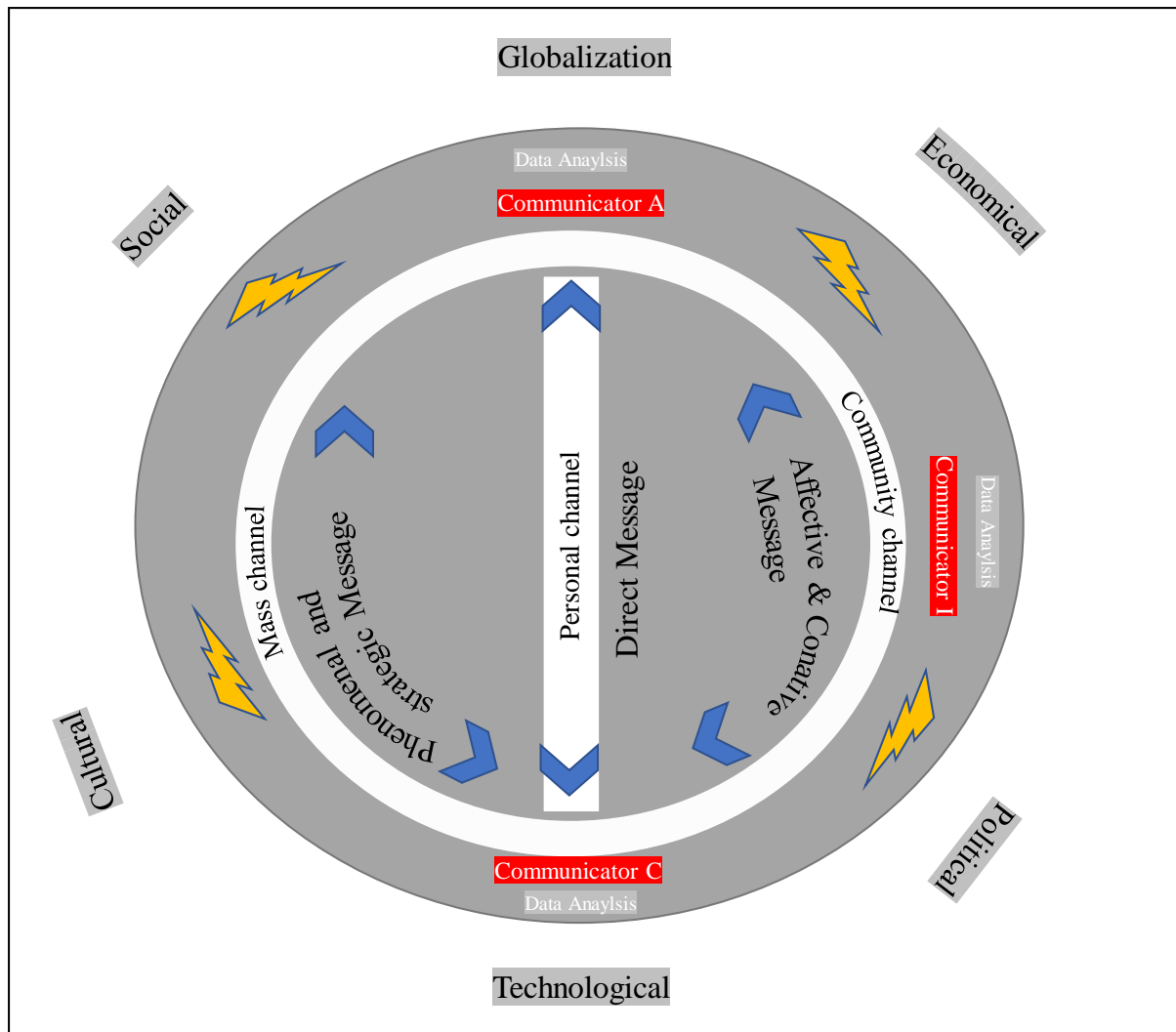
happens through ideas shared by the Communicator, the knowledge and language he uses in the media; power is more than ever in his hands and he plays the role of influencer for advertisers. The consumer is becoming more selective and is just interested in what is relative to him, his needs, his lifestyle and the subjects that interest him. Digital platforms have probably moved power from the hands of advertisers to the hands of consumers, who themselves become communicators. There is a continuous communication between the two communicators: Communicator A (advertiser) and Communicator C (consumer). There is also a communication between the (advertiser) Communicator A, the Communicator I (influential) and the Communicator C (consumer).

The Social Lebanese life lies in communicative happiness of family ties and bright new generation contact. This lively contact between different members of the family and between friends is revealed on the digital platform, especially on social networks where Lebanese consumers share many details of their personal lives, like information shared and comment on this information. This explains the strong penetration of Facebook and WhatsApp in Lebanon, reflecting the Lebanese culture, which is a culture open to the other. In fact, social networks play a very important role at the level of feedback, which is becoming a two-way communication more than a simple feedback.

**The Feedback** is more direct, quick and accessible to everyone. Positive or negative, it creates a 'buzz' around the brand. In the new model of communication, the feedback is replaced by a two - way communication, an ongoing communication which takes the form of a vicious cycle that never stops. Communication, which begins and ends by the consumer who can no longer be controlled nor neglected by the brand, but on the contrary, his feedback, should be used, in order to improve ongoing communication between different communicators through the different channels.

**The Noise** is the only element, which has not changed since the model of Shannon and Weaver, only the noise intensity has increased, due to the increase in the number of communicators, the number of channels and the fact that communication became a continuous communication.

Finally, it is important to add the social, economic, political and cultural factors in Lebanon, influencing advertising in a direct way, as for example, the emergence of political campaigns from the years 2005-2006, caused by political instability in the country. Another example is the fall of advertising budgets, from the years 2000 related to the low rate of economic growth of the country. Finally, Lebanese culture directly influence the languages used in the commercials. Many more examples can illustrate the influence of the factors mentioned, on the advertising and communication in Lebanon; hence the need to place these factors in the new model of communication: "a circular Communication" which has the shape of a vicious circle, where communication never stops as presented below:



 The Noise

**Figure 2:** The Circular Communication Model

The circular communication model is a vicious circle where the communication never stops between communicators. Communicators are: Communicator A representing the advertiser, the Communicator I representing the influential and the Communicator C representing the consumer. Communication is done through several channels:

- The personal channel sends a **direct message** between Communicator A and Communicator C, often this personal communication is done through digital media.
- The community channel sends a message that is both **affective and conative**, between Communicator A, Communicator I and the Communicator C.
- The mass channel broadcasts a **phenomenal and strategic** message between Communicator A and Communicator C, through the integration of conventional and digital media that can reach a wide number of communicators.

The messages circulating between communicators are direct, emotional, conatifs, phenomenal and strategic messages. These messages are developed and interpreted from data analysis that is becoming available and easily accessible to all communicators. The numbers of messages, communicators and channels have improved the intensity of noise in the commercial. The decreased period of attention of the communicator has made the transmission of the advertising message even harder. All of this increased the need for innovative ideas in the creation of messages and in media planning. Finally, the circular communication model, which represents the advertising communication in the Lebanon is influenced by factors related to globalization and technology worldwide, and by factors related to society, culture, politics and the economy at the local level. The new in this model of communication is its circular shape, as well as the absence of feedback , receiver and sender. This model can be defined as a model in the form of vicious circle, which represents a continuous communication between different types of communicators using different types of channels where digital media and traditional media are integrated. The messages developed through data analysis are phenomenal, strategic, direct, cognitive and emotional. Communication is internally influenced by noise and externally by the global, technological, social, cultural, political and economic factors. One of the main objectives of the study was to understand the development and changes that occurred in the field of communication. Having access to research and data related to the traditional media was easy due to the research platforms “Statex” and “Arianna”. However, there was no platform that monitors the advertising expenditures on digital media which has limited us from monitoring the evolution of advertising expenditures on the internet especially between 2000 and 2005. In addition to that, the period of the study is also considered as a limitation since the biggest changes related to the internet penetration appeared after year 2015.

## **5. Recommendations**

The research is done around three main axes: The content, the format and the media. From these three axes we were able to develop a new communication model to illustrate the changes that occurred on these three levels. Our recommendations are based on these three axes:

- The content is more and more simple, direct and personal. The advertising messages should be “True” and emotional. The messages are focused on the consumer experience more than the functionality of the product and aim to create an engagement with the consumer that will initiate advocacy. Data analysis plays a major role in the creation of content.
- The format is less artistic and more strategic with more focus on the visual than the text. The format should be adapted to the different formats of media especially the videos they should be shorter and with different versions.
- The media are integrated we cannot classify anymore media into “digital” and “traditional”. It is necessary to use media in a unusual innovative way. For example, Coca Cola created its own program “coke studio” to promote its products rather than using normal spots on TV. The challenge today is to use traditional media in an untraditional way.

Finally, the new communication model should be used as a reference to better understand how the communication is shaped by the changes that occurred on all levels and especially in technology. This



communication model helps in developing more effective communication. It is important to integrate this new model in the education to help students better understand how communication occurs through different channels and with external influences. In summary, the findings from this research confirm that there has been an important development at the level of advertising strategies in Lebanon and that the aspects of this development are revealed at the level of the format, the content of the media, the consumer and the advertising industry in general. The communication does not stop to evolve; understanding this development helps advertisers communicate better with their consumers and help them create more effective advertising messages. The changes that took place in Lebanon, especially between 2010 and 2015 with the penetration of the internet were so fast and their effects were so direct on brands, on advertising agencies, and on consumers who have adapted to these changes without trying to understand the phenomenon which has caused these changes. This study helps the university sector and the advertising industry to better understand the factors and aspects of the changes which took place at the level of the advertising communication during the last 15 years, which will help develop more effective advertising strategies that are based on the particularity of the Lebanese market.

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